



SANJAY PERERA 2015-10-29

## A THEORY OF ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

LEXICON,  
NECROPOLITICS

BARBARISM, BATAILLE, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, HETEROLOGY, NON-ECONOMY, NON-LARUELLE,  
QUEER, VERAUSGABUNG

*'They're waiting patiently, like the long-suffering lot they are, in the firm conviction that someone has conned them. They are waiting, belly to the ground, like cats at pig-killing time, hoping for scraps. They are like servants that work at a castle where the master has shot himself: they hang around at an utter loss as to what to do...'*  
[Irimias] 'Enough poetry, boss, I am terrified enough already!' [Petrina] – *Satantango*, Laszlo Krasznahorkai.

It is usually the case if you see a doctor he would give medicine fitting his diagnosis of your ailment. What he will avoid is branching-off into the realm of holistic medicine. He is bound to conduct his practice within the ambit of so-called scientific or 'western' oriented approaches to medicine. He must conform to such standards as demanded by the boards and councils which in turn (usually backed by the law), guarantee professional recognition of his qualifications: which thereby allow him to dispense medical advice, cures and earn a living.

Similarly in economics, the neoclassical approach (sometimes tempered with heterodoxy) is the one the academies, professional journals and Nobel prize committees decide is the standard for the study and practice of economics. Meanwhile, many in the world and policymakers are still enthralled by economic arcana which perpetuates the belief in the world's apparent lack of resources via frenetic theorizing, graphs and statistics – such that some today even regard it as a form of revealed religion that can also solve problems. Economics is also taken by its disciples to be a science (like the hard sciences). And apparently like science as we know it, economics is supposed to get things done and has a rational explanation for everything.

But some of us know better. The analogy that best reflects the situation is that of the redoubtable (though these days ever-melting) iceberg. What economics, and policies crafted from them, represent is the one-tenth we see above the water. As has been established it is the remaining nine-tenths, unseen, which is the bulwark against which even the Titanic cannot withstand. Alas, we are on a ship that is so fixated on viewing the superficial realities of what the one-tenth of economic-scientific rationalism showcases that we are blind to or are in denial of the remaining nine-tenths.



We finally become aware (arguably) of what lies beneath the tip of the iceberg when we crash into it or when we observe what happens to others who have such misfortune. We are also aware that there are those hidden aspects of the world and our lives

that we have erred in separating or trying to hive away by terming it 'personal'; or regarding as separate the 'public' sphere even though it is clearly of human/humane interest and impacts us in the most personal manner. It is wrong to maintain an attitude of the public/official sphere influenced by the high priests of economics as that which should be decided separately from what affects us deeply in an individual and collective way. We are not only continually reeling from the effects of such separation, but are in danger of never recouping from them. It is the obsession with merely the visible, the quantifiable and the measurable that has been our undoing and, increasingly, that of the planet.

We commit an even greater error in not realizing that the visible is but a part of the whole iceberg. We have bifurcated the world in a pernicious manner through rationality that has put us harmfully at odds with what is unseen (but whose effects are tangible). It is this misalignment of our selves from the non-rational by being force-fed the rational that serves to further precipitate those aspects of human behaviour regarded as disturbing. In fact, it is this excess rationality and imposition of the doctrine and dogma of economic theory that plays a tremendous role in wreaking havoc upon the human psyche and all life forms on the planet.

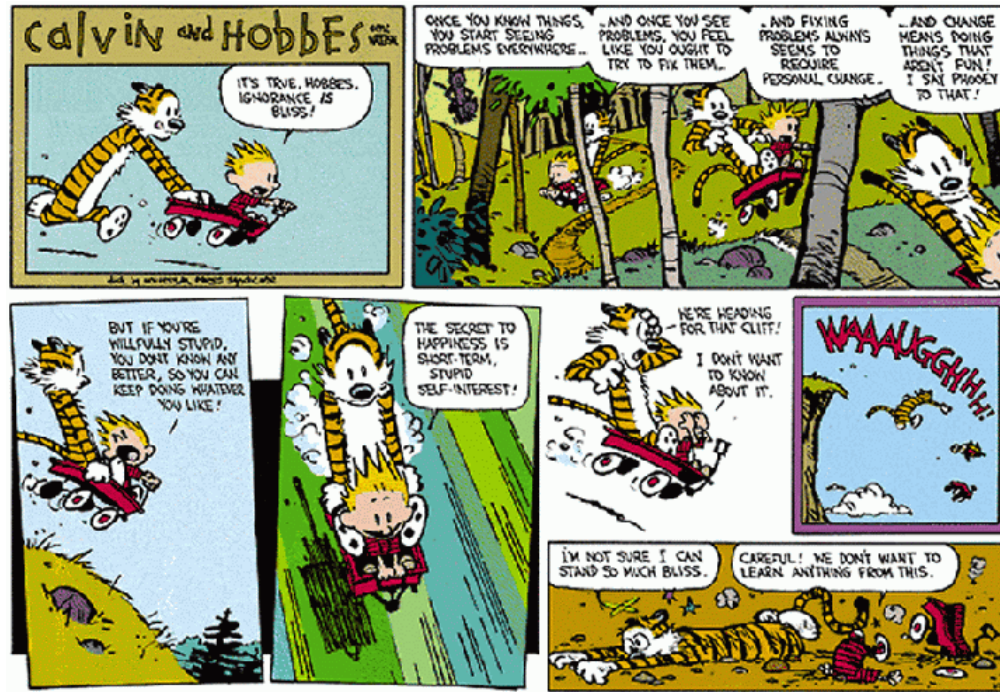


#### A. A sketch of sorts

It is the analogy of the iceberg and the contrast between what is visible and seemingly invisible that is of importance in this essay and the ones that stem from it. We are concerned here not only with the crucial and life-and-death determining weightiness of the remaining nine-tenths underlying the *prima facie* nature of economic theory, but viewing the iceberg in its *totality*. However, in viewing the iceberg holistically we naturally take into account the visible aspects of it that most economic theories taught in academies obsess over. Moreover, more of us are beginning to see that we need a holistic approach if we ever want to cure our socio-economic ills, which in many instances cannot be assuaged by traditional diagnoses of our pathology.

True, doctors may say that stress lowers one's immunity to illness and taking vitamin C and exercising is a good thing, but they would probably stop there. Their medical licenses may depend on that. Economists may talk about 'externalities' that could sometimes be factored in assessments (such as the quality of the environment) but they do not want to transgress beyond academic boundaries that not only delimit their professional concerns, but can have a direct impact on where they get published and, thus, their career track. Meanwhile, economics students in institutions eagerly try to interpret lines intersecting (or not) on a graph to clear their exams so as to gain a certificate that is supposed to help material advancement when they leave for the 'real' world.

So what indeed is the 'real' world if not that which the academy skirts around and is terrified of; or perhaps it is what is portrayed as satisfying some 'job requirement' or 'skills set' directly relevant to employment. In truth, the 'real' world is that of slaves-consumers who dance to the dictates of the profit-mongers and those at the top of the pyramid of Capital who wield the whip on all life.



### (i) The problem of economic rationality

A central issue here is the idea of economic rationality (ER) which in Kantian terms has a transcendental logic of its own. ER revolves around the idea of utility and self-centeredness of individuals. It cuts itself up and everyone else dragged upon its Procrustean bed of linearity – where everything is limited/scarcely and examined piecemeal.

We also have the apparent separation between micro and macroeconomics. Yet, the neoclassical palaver of intersecting graphs and excessive quantification of everything leads nowhere other than more graphs and meaningless figures and calculations: that only justify the rich getting richer and the poor, well, the usual. Macroeconomic theory provides a broader narrative and tales about money and banking, various tools of economic management – juggling of interest rates and taxes (which usually allow some loopholes for the wealthy and big business), and whatever else that does not help the human race or the planet. When do we hear strong cases being made by economists or other financial 'experts' on the need to curtail armament spending and launching wars of aggression? Truth be told, economics is the perfect dogma-doctrine for Capital.

Economics has created an artificially induced laboratory type product called economic man, or ER man: a homunculus which behaves irrationally but at the same time is supposed to be guided by rationality for his best interests. The schizoid tendency of ER man is a defining characteristic of people as consumers. This homunculus guided by ER is the *summum bonum* of human evolution, and he then becomes a creature which acts according to the dictates of economists and their theories. Note that there is no human model beyond the homunculus, ever. It is all quite rational. This is how the world is supposed to become a better place.



The ER homunculus is the subject of and subject to linear thinking wherein ideas of humanity, compassion, justice and being reasonable are cast away for a restricted mode of thinking compatible with straight lines (sometimes curved) and axioms of rationality; this implies acting only for the best interests of oneself and serving the rules of ER (whatever they may be depending on what is the flavour of the academy, journals or the Nobel selection committee).

ER and its creatures are the kind of product which thrives best without ethical concerns. It does not matter who dies as a result of such rational extremity (nor how they meet their end), or if the environment is destroyed daily; for what matters is whether everything within a closed system of thinking can be *rationalized* according to some economic theory. It has everything to do with impinging life forms with violence and violates every sense of reasonableness. It is one thing to study economics as a field of intellectual pornography, it is quite another to implement its ideas as state policy thereby legally sanctioning a form of unacknowledged murder: death by economics.

People are not usually rational (though they can be that way at times); they are largely irrational and non-rational. This is not only about doing things that no one can predict because they do not make 'sense' (irrational with the 'negative' connotations accompanying it), but we give in to the non-rational (everything else that makes us human and more): compassion, justice, treating people fairly, helping others without expectation of reward, etc. It is not rationality, but reason (compatible with the non-rational) that allows us to think through doing things the right way for the best and highest interests of all: we tend to call this reasonableness. So though we are well within the influence of the non-rational most of the time, it also allows us to be reasonable — that is, we do things that can have an ethical basis to it; whereas rationality as such, particularly ER, tends to bring out the worst in people (self-interestedness, selfishness, profit-mongering, blindness to the holistic approach to living, and the unnatural acceptance of daily violence as normal).

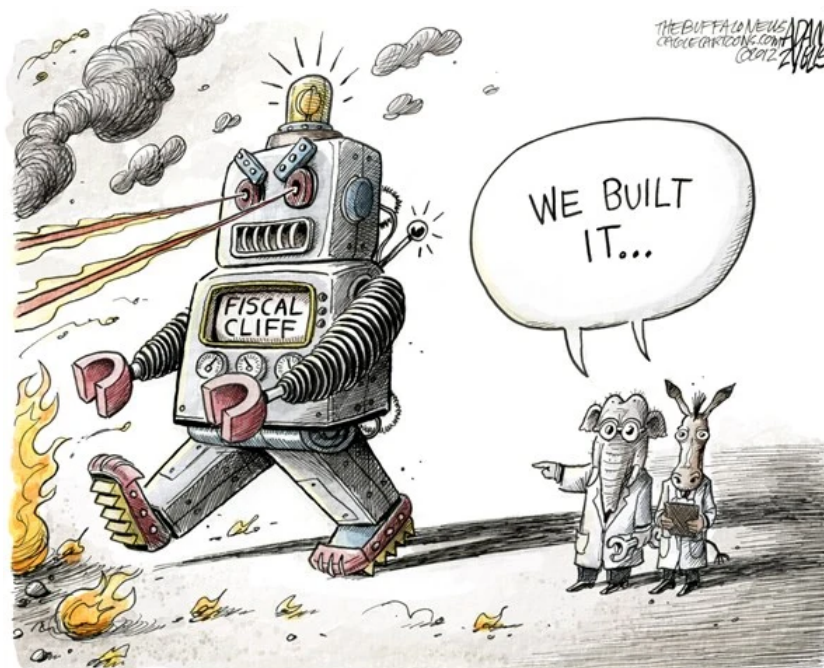




### (ii) *Where do we go from here*

This essay is meant to provide a broad framework that will link the ideas from "Revolutionary constructivism" through "The economy of violence" and to "A critique of Capital". It is meant to show that there are countervailing forces at work which frame socio-economic discussion away from the traditional and limiting discourse of ER. The Kantian critique underlies the entire discussion but takes a back-seat and will surface again in later pieces when much of the ideas in the current articles finally come together as a whole. The use of Reason as contrasted to ER is indeed central to the entire project but it must also be clear that we have to go beyond the conformism of linear thought towards richer, complex and holistic thinking that not only better reflects the reality of existence, but opens up spaces and possibilities that take us beyond the obsession with the measurable and quantitative reasoning.

The ideas discussed here are also meant to be the thin end of the wedge into re-opening the idea for a replacement concept and term for 'the economy' (please see "A critique of Capital III") by a process that is expressive of a system of 'Just production and distribution': and the purpose of this is to get us into thinking over what a moral economy may look like defined by justice and fairness.



### B. Bataille's economics

We return to making a broader summary and re-look at Georges Bataille's socio-political-economic ideas ("The economy of violence") by introducing the important concept of heterology. The idea of heterology allows us to see why we must move away from linear thinking in order to have a better understanding of human beings and their environment. It is an attempt to show the connection, an inescapable one, between the tip of the iceberg of ER and the non-rational that in turn adds buoyancy to the whole enterprise. (The idea of heterology may be examined further in a forthcoming piece).

While much of Bataille's economic thinking can be seen as linking the past to 1930-1950s Europe and a post-WWII world turning into a Cold War one, his prescience in many matters is coming into the fore again. It is difficult to deny his influence on many prominent European intellectuals (some of whom are discussed below) which in turn have led to a welcome complex and comprehensive socio-political theorizing that ballasts against ER. Much of our take of Bataille's ideas may not conform to his particular use of them (for while brilliant they can be limited by his version of Nietzschean nihilism); we use his ideas as a platform to investigate further those originally posited by him by taking them in a direction he stopped short of.

Mentioned here are general aspects of Bataille's economic ideas. His economic project tries to move us away from the knowledge-limiting constraints of neoclassical ER, particularly the focus on utility as a means of understanding human attitudes, and the closed system of scarcity that bedevils it. It is easy to argue on how his ideas are influenced by Sade, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud but Bataille does take us further in certain respects in trying to provide some form of coherency as to how such ideas coupled with his own can reflect better our socio-political realities – this is his exercise in heterology. Yet, he was conscious even as he wrote *The accursed share* that his ideas were situated in the context of his time though meant to go beyond that period.

Bataille's concern was to point out that rather than scarcity, the fundamental issue of economics was surplus — in that it is not that we do not have enough resources but rather the world is teeming in abundance. All is energy and what matters is the circulation of that energy in terms of how resources are directed. However, his main point is that instead of lack being an economic reality, it is expenditure of energy and resources (or wastefulness) that is the lynchpin of our world. The lack we seem to face (sometimes due to the elites siphoning away and hoarding wealth) is a result of the capitalist paradigm's *expenditure-waste of energy-resources instead of its proper harnessing and distribution for the benefit of all*.



With his unique take on political economy, Bataille shows how his idea of expenditure works out by citing the development of past societies to post-Marshall Plan Europe and the rise of Stalinism. He explains that waste and expenditure also take place in the form of large monuments, massive celebrations, and the pursuit of much that does not fall into the category of economic utility (ER) such as artworks. The bulk of existence involves the nine-tenths of the iceberg that is in effect reflective of the *entire* iceberg – this is the holistic, inclusive approach that does not artificially differentiate between what is visible and what is not. There is an attempt to account for everything; it is not meant to be a totalizing conceptualization of the world, but rather an ever open-endedness to give life itself breathing space in socio-politico-economic thought.

So the obsession with theorizing what is above water (for the iceberg) in the most limited and rectilinear manner is quite silly. It is especially senseless in that it places what has become an academic and constricting template of rationality that is not only inaccurate but misleading; it dangerously simplifies what is rich, expansive and complex into something that can be measured (quite specifically at times) and expressed through graphs and statistics. Better still, it is all made examinable and given to grading by its practitioners in various institutions.

What Bataille is in effect saying is that not only do we miss the forest for the trees by assessing things via scarcity instead of

seeing the amount of expenditure and wastage that goes on daily, but that the act of imposing an economics of lack/limitation does not attenuate waste as it still occurs in some form or another. The point he makes is that of sacrifice, expenditure and waste of human energy and life that not only inevitably occurs, but that it occurs specifically in a manner that extols wastage when placed on the altar of theoretical expedience and utility – this is the accursed share. In fact, ER facilitates a sacrifice of the many for the comforts and luxury of the few: most of humanity or certain people must be destroyed to keep things going. We are that surplus to be expended so that the few reap the material wealth and benefits through exploitation of us and other life forms.

These crucial ideas of expenditure or Bataille's holistic approach to political economy, go beyond trying to adjust things on a scale as evinced by the laughable notion of economic equilibrium (Walrasian, Paretian); for him stability or 'balance' of sorts is achieved by a kind of blood-letting (literally in the case of wars, disease and famine). That there must be *active destruction* in order to maintain the status quo of hierarchy in which the ruthless try to rule through key groups and organizations at the top of the pyramid just as their minions imitate them and try to lord it over all else: this explains quite effectively the devastating nature of economic growth at all costs, and the vicious drive of capitalism that ravishes life and the environment. It also explains the quest for war. This is why Bataille's economic notions are valuable just as those of the neoclassicists fail badly in accounting for the most important consequences of the distribution/misdistribution of economic energy.



However, while Bataille's system seems to work in a three-dimensional (3D) framework that is reflective of the closed system of ER, it is much more in that he clearly pushes boundaries and enhances things by viewing them as an energetic matrix. This certainly resonates with those of us aware of the ideas and possibilities provided by quantum physics. In other words, by perceiving economic activity in a heightened manner via a holistic energy framework of waste, expenditure and surplus, Bataille adds a dimension of complexity by upping- the-ante as he challenges the limiting framework of ER.

(The extra-dimensional nature of things was discussed somewhat differently in "Revolutionary constructivism" but is consistent in showing that trying to think linearly about human affairs imposes 3D limitations on what requires a multidimensional mode of thinking. Einstein's dictum that "imagination is more important than knowledge" is useful here. This form of thinking is further discussed below).

In the second and third volumes of *The accursed share* Bataille explores the ideas of sexuality, transgression, and sovereignty (the hidden aspects of the iceberg) that provide a fuller picture of humanity in relation to surplus energy and expenditure and its connection to the economy. What can only be stated here briefly is that through examining the different aspects of human (energetic) expenditure and Bataille's transmutation of Nietzsche's 'will to power' do we gain further insight into what economic expenditure, loss, sacrifice and the destructive nature of much of existence are about: he is unnerving and steadfast in this endeavour.

Despite Bataille's impressive insights he cannot himself ultimately go much beyond the idea of sacrifice-expenditure, even though he takes things to a level higher than ER with his energetic framework (or enriched 3D mode of thought). Yet he does provide the material, as expanded upon below, to give sharper relief and clarity into why we are in the current rut of millenarian debt-ridden entropy; this then allows us to push on with the need to rise up again and transform life onto a higher plane of living.





### C. A clutch of French thinkers

Interestingly, most of the thinkers discussed here are French. Certainly the pair of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (D&G) must be mentioned in this context as a follow-up to Bataille's views. It should be stated that Foucault's ideas of madness, punishment, institutional-control and a panoptical society are quite relevant to our times and have a lineage from Bataille and others, but the important books *Anti-Oedipus* and *A thousand plateaus* — which together form a work termed *Capitalism and schizophrenia* — by D&G cannot go unmentioned. (A foray into examining these ideas can found here: “The libidinal economy: Capitalism and schizophrenia”).

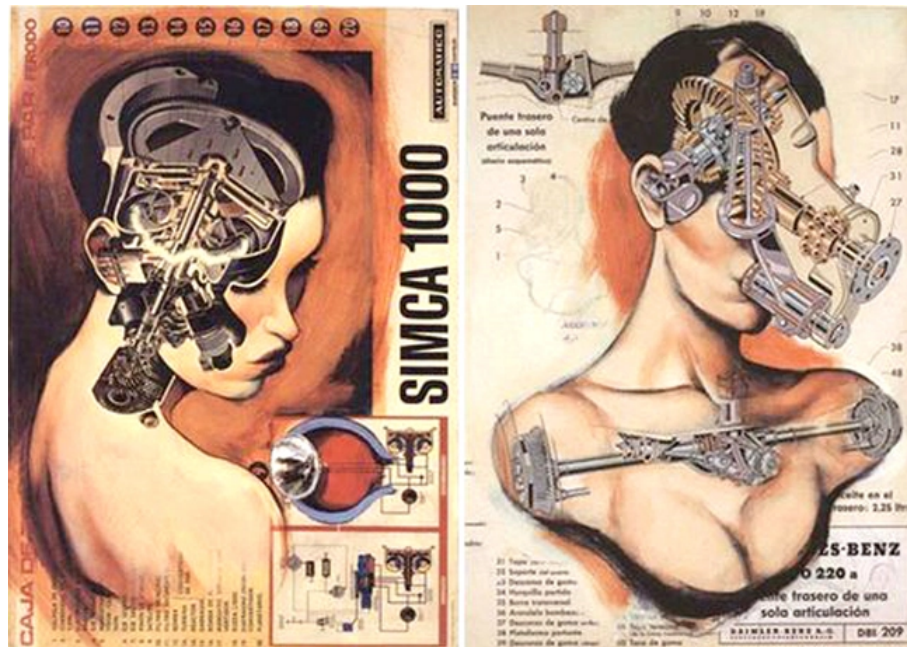
#### (i) *Capitalism and schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus*

As a means of delineating the impact of the non-rational and giving a holistic view of society and its influences, especially in an economic and political context, *Anti-Oedipus* holds an iconic place. The book is complex but the thrust of what D&G say is that instead of seeing merely the materialistic facets and commodification of existence through Freudian and Marxist analysis, we should try to go beyond that and examine the flow of energy in society and our lives in a unique way.

D&G make an interesting breakthrough in pointing out that the structuralization of production in an economy is false – it is actually about energetic flows of what we term 'economic' forces. But those forces are not the traditional flows of cash, resources, their scarcity and distribution; they are instead flows of desire and the libidinal current which in turn determine our socio-economic reality. This desiring flow is complicated in the case of capitalism due to its deterritorializing effect.

Not only are people to be seen as desiring machines who when plugged into economic production become social machines, they are bodies-without-organs and are energetic flows devoid of the ego (that is the Freudian substitute for individuality and the focus of our neuroses). If we can go beyond the ego, possessiveness and the problems associated with this, we may find paths of energetic flight that could allow us to express our desires and creations on a collective energetic level that is beneficial. The duo try to give us a mapping for a prison breakout from the ego.

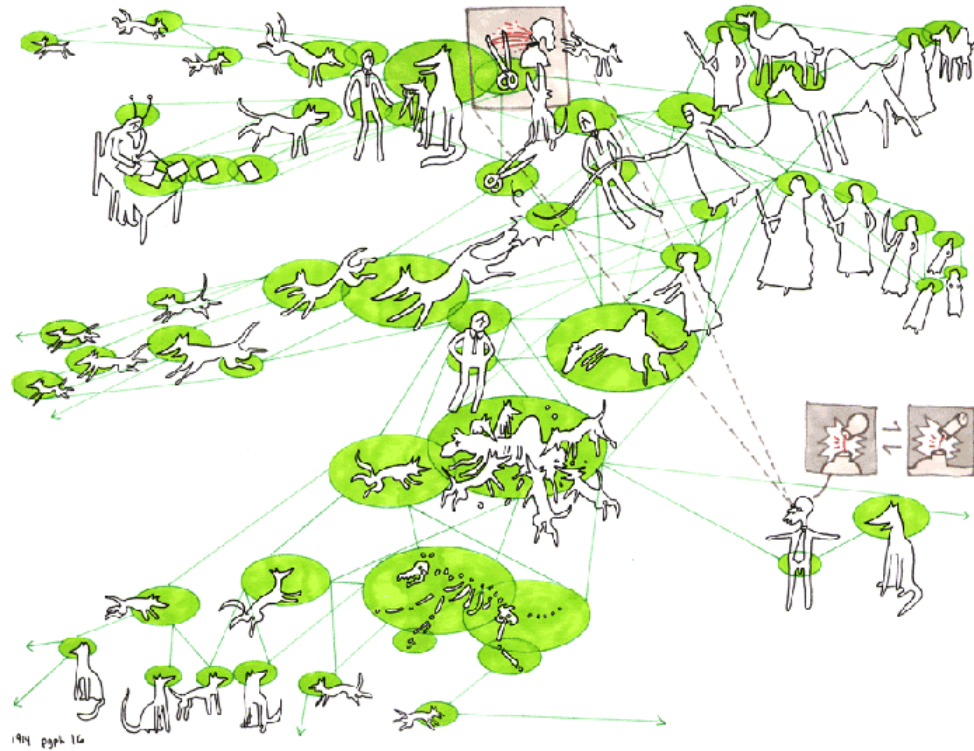




There is also a tendency for our energetic flows to oscillate between the psychosis/paranoia of fascism and the neurosis of schizophrenia. This analysis of our situation is termed schizoanalysis by D&G as they state that we are largely in this situation due to capitalism. While fascism and various hierarchies of control have a territorializing effect on our social bodies and consciousness or society itself (the socius) we are being led towards a deterritorializing effect by the schizophrenic pull of capitalism.

What happens with capitalism is that whatever codings the socius is impacted upon by socio-politico-economic forces, there is also a decoding effect by it that loosens our individual and collective energies towards confusion and creates difficulty in coming to terms with 'realities': as the *fundamental energetic imprint of money under capitalism* provides that decoding-deterritorializing-mediating effect between production and consumption; it is all-pervasive, induces fear by removing all form of security and is a source of emotional and mental anguish. The pair are prescient regarding our times, considering the book appeared in the early 1970s; like Marx, they are on target with their insight into where capitalism would take us through the deterritorializing effect of globalization on our lives.

While some of what D&G say may seem esoteric it is no more so than the arcane meanderings (inundated with mathematics when an impression of profundity is required) of neoclassical economics. The duo delve into the non-rational to show that people are essentially desiring-machines and as such can be seen to not only desire what they need and have been shaped into being 'consumers', they have also been honed into needing what they want and this allows their energies to flow in the direction of schizoid tendencies especially with the unraveling of the machine of capital — through the deterritorializing flow of capital itself upon everything wherever it goes (it has the gravity defying ability to trickle and percolate up toward the rich and elites, and certainly does not trickle down).

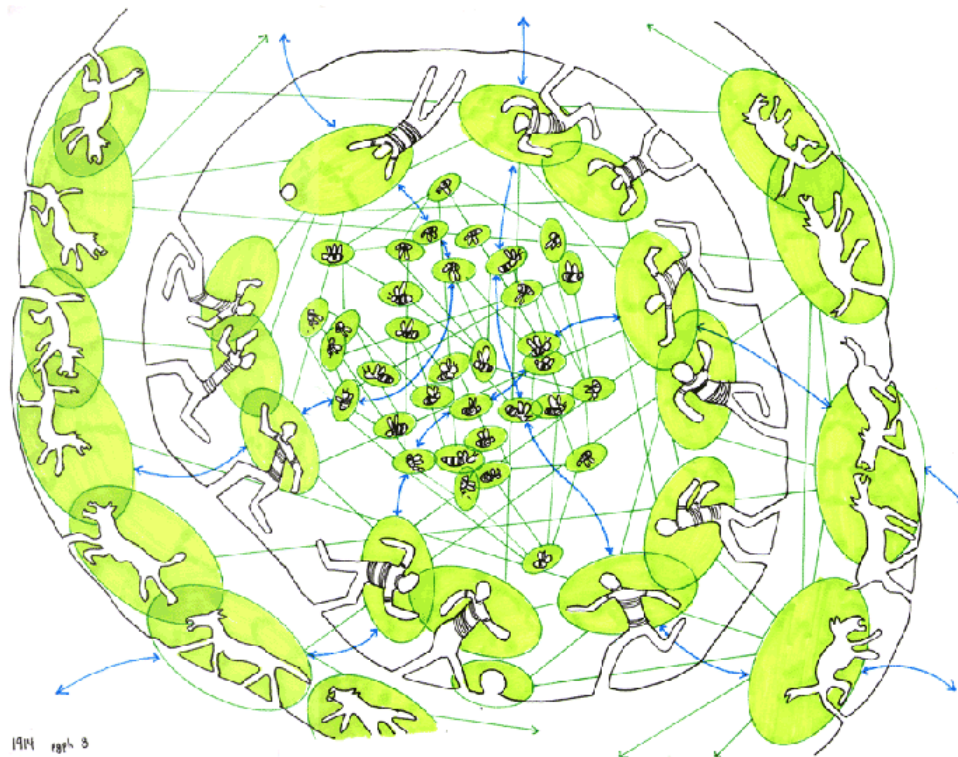


## (ii) *Capitalism and schizophrenia: A thousand plateaus*

Things are taken further with D&G's follow-up to *Anti-Oedipus* — *A thousand plateaus*. In *Plateaus* the idea of lines of flight which are an anti-hierarchical (or anti-patriarchal) way of thinking, take on the form of the rhizome. And the mode of rhizomatic thinking brings forth the idea of the nomad and accentuates the role of energetic deterritorializing, bodies-without-organs and various machines (or assemblages) that are abstract machines or concepts.

The machinic expenditure of energy takes on the form of the war machine. The latter is a deterritorializing energy complex that is not in itself that of war proper (as war itself can be taken over by this process and flow from there); it is a flow of capture, decoding and transference into an assemblage which can happen to many things, for example the State apparatus. This flow of capture and transformation is similar to what capitalism does on various social machines as well as the State apparatus.

The economic machine is captured and deterritorialized by capitalism and the money flow: this in turn reshapes society, human thinking and values. This rhizomatic flow is in contrast to an arboreal mode of hierarchy and is consistent with that of plateaus (Bateson's idea of the 'plateau' in his conception of the Balinese libidinal flow is cited by D&G). The plateau is an extension of the intensities of experience and is in contradistinction to a single peak (that is, patriarchal libidinal explosion). What D&G are trying to show is how the complexity of desires of consumers and those expending life force and money on commodities are libidinally contoured into a prolonged plateau of titillation-experience. We are assemblages of desire and production.



So Bataille's idea of libidinal expenditure is heightened and extended to a flow of *energetic investment of desire* into the basis of consumption, production of commodities, the way things are managed, and the creation of art forms. This abstract machinic flow of energy in a rhizomatic way of seemingly infinitely connecting plateaus is a kind of socio-economic-politico mapping of society and the world: it is this libidinal-desiring web or tapestry that shapes everything rather than the ER of some glorified laboratory rat (homunculus).

It is the non-rational that ultimately determines things, as our energies can and are subverted and channeled into different social structures or assemblages that when reflective of what rationalism unleashes by way of the war machine (deterritorializing effect) — takes us away from human fulfillment with its ethical bias and towards dehumanization: or that which is colonized by the values of destruction, monetarism and exploitation.

Another important notion that D&G introduce is micropolitics. Everything is not only political, but it is politicized. They are quite right in this for political control and influence, and not necessarily that which is party political but that which is subject to the war machine machinations of fascism in all its guises: will capture, deterritorialize and reterritorialize human beings (assemblages) into digits or subjects (Oedipalized structures brought under control). This is how microfascisms spread which appeals to a desire for fascism in most people. People want not only control but usually demand to be led.

It is ideas like those of D&G which enhance the ineluctably forceful recognition of the non-rational that underscore what should be a proper mode of socio-economic analysis of human life and activity. It is a holistic approach.



### (iii) *The libidinal economy*

An important but often neglected work is Jean-François Lyotard's *Libidinal economy* which is also a response to *Anti-Oedipus*. However, a close reading of it and *A thousand plateaus* — reveals that D&G took certain key ideas of Lyotard's and translated them into their work (e.g. his *dispositif* and assemblages turn up as assemblages in D&G; this accommodation and takeover of ideas is consistent with the rhizomatic and war machine nature of *A thousand plateaus*).

Lyotard tries to go beyond the bodies-without-organs to create his body politic of the libidinal band. By using the idea of libidinal drives (pulsions) and intensities he tries to show that the socio-economic-political forces of many societies are expressed as a sublimation or at times sublation of emotional-sexual intensities of the moment; that trying to theorize about it only precipitates a 'cooling' effect (producing what he terms a 'theatrical volume') which loses the decisional drives and intensities that shape our lives. He wants us to understand and sense the immediacy of the libidinal nature of living and human activity.

Much closer to Sade and Bataille in intensity (and Nietzsche in narrative drive), Lyotard sees the economic structures of society not so much as social machines but as expressions of libidinal investment of energies by people into these forms (and practices). There are many aspects to this but one is that our energies which are invested in socio-economic formations are this libidinal transference that makes us desire what we have including what comes across as punishing and painful. So the libidinal drive that brings about suffering may not always be what we detest: it is part of energies that are also expressed in ways manifested by sexual form and practices.





Lyotard's expression of sexual politics and economics (he considers himself a libidinal economist in this sense) is quite representative of the context in which his book was written – the sixties, the turbulence of the time and the low and high intensity conflicts engendered then. It is often forgotten that if Keynesianism is reflective of the Depression and 1930s, D&G's *Capitalism and schizophrenia* is also a product of the 1960s and '70s and, like Lyotard's seminal work (pun unintended) parallels the difficulties and confusions arising from 'wars of liberation' throughout the world (e.g. the Indo-Chinese/Vietnam conflicts). It is these European thinkers' heady concoction of Marx à la Freud in overdrive across various plateaus and highs (pun intended) of intensity that brings into relief the revolutionary 1960s counterculture ingrained in the DNA of these particular works. But that does not make reading them dated as they resonate disturbingly with our times as there is a *Fin de siècle* quality to them.

Marx's idea of the capitalist economy and the production and consumer relationship being one of prostitution where labour power is sold to the highest (sometimes lowest) bidder while tolerating all kinds of emotional, psychological and physical abuse – is extended by Lyotard. Money which is the mediator comes off as a pimp; it plays that role well in the production cycle as the go-between in providing goods and services. Everything has a quantifiable price for its use-value.

This process of socio-economic prostitution is a quintessential instance of the libidinal economy at work and we witness this play out in our age of advertising and marketing. The entire market economy is driven to *sell* products and 'dreams': and people are also inevitably transmuted into commodities. Politicians *sell* policies; corporations *sell* commodities; people *sell* themselves, their values and one another – an entire exchange process of libidinal investment of use-value beyond what Marx envisioned. The use-value of labour power is self-prostitution; its marketing edge is called a 'unique *selling* point'.



The chapter on Capital in Lyotard's work deals with sexual imagery and practices which go beyond Marx but may have had the approval of Bataille had he lived to read it. The section that deals with this is hardly indulgent as it is part of understanding economic drives and processes through the libidinal framework of investing, extracting and storing which is not only reflective of monetary investment, but certain traditional sexual practices.

(A scene in Hitchcock's final film, *Family plot*, where Barbara Harris tells Bruce Dern who is trying to have a night away from her and get some rest – "What are you saving it for, a rainy day?" To which he replies, "Honey, you never know when you're gonna need it." Lyotard may have smiled at that).

Lyotard develops Bataille's notion of the accumulation/storage and expenditure of capital in that it is kept in reserve or stock to be spent and unleashed suddenly. It is a means of obtaining gratification or a means of exerting power and destruction. Not only would Bataille agree with the use and expenditure of Capital as a means of destruction, punishment, sacrifice and waste but it ties in to the concept of Capital as power wherein it is a mode of sabotage and disruption.

Indeed the idea of the libidinal economy is reflective of much that we see in the world and offers an imaginative and empirically verifiable set of ideas that are not only helpful as an alternative to the neoclassical narrative and ER but provides an immediacy and resonance to many aspects of what it is to be human; certainly this would resonate with the experience of many people. Anyone who has had to struggle to earn their daily bread and has less than sanguine working conditions and customers to deal with will say that much of what is described by Lyotard and others here brings to light our most personal thoughts and experiences. No one reacts and lives according to the dictates of ER and some economist's fantasy, but we react/live in many



ways as described by these other thinkers, as well as presented by the works of great writers who if anything are grounded in the non-rational and often the ethical.



It is these ideas of the non-rational as opposed to ER that inform us of alternative and more accurate means of understanding, empathizing and dealing/managing not only ourselves but our resources. With an understanding of the libidinal and emotive drives, desires and what has not been elaborated on here much – the moral underpinning of doing what is right and fair to others – we discover humane ways of working out economic matters. So it is unsurprising that much of Lyotard's ideas are creative and at times almost literary expressions of political economy, for it is a reminder that we are dealing with human beings and their desires, wants and hopes: not sanitized homunculi cultured from a strain of ER in a test-tube.

The complexity and richness of economic production and distribution in a manner that is ethically sound, compassionate and respectful of the environment can be developed. But the insistence on ER produces a violence that is calculated and destructive beyond the non-rational drives and intensities of humans: we have seen it in action as the dogma that supports the viciousness of capitalism. In fact, it distorts, subverts and mis-channels the libidinal current away from what can be harnessed for the benefit of all into that which is microfascist and dehumanizing. That there are destructive urges in people is not being denied by the thinkers here; for how can that be the case when these works emanated from periods of world war, international conflict, fascism and totalitarianism.

What is being argued is that ER is guilty specifically of framing and creating a situation in which the humanity, or richness and complexity of human life and personality, and emotive exchanges that take place between people are left in abeyance by economics. Most dangerously – ethical, humane and environmentally protective ideas are not the core of economics, rather it is money-making. This is where the tip of the iceberg gives the false impression of what lies beneath. It is in not acknowledging the crucial and non-rational aspects of being human, and the reasonableness and ethical/moral grounding of so many of us that produces a massive misdirection of our energies. It is this malformation and distortion of energy that throws us and our world out of balance ecologically, socially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually.



#### D. Non-philosophy or non-standard philosophy

The time has come to consider the ideas of François Laruelle particularly his development of the concept of non-philosophy (NP) contra Badiou. Much of what is discussed here is but a prefatory gesture for subsequent pieces which may use Laruelle's thoughts as a platform to develop ideas contra the economic theory of the World Establishment, the use of Capital as power, and the violence it precipitates; it is also meant to open pathways to walk upon toward socio-economic justice.

Challenging and at times witty and sharp, Laruelle broadly states three things relating to his important idea of NP. First, he is (consciously or otherwise) trying to 'complete' the Kantian architectonic of thinking, knowledge, metaphysics, and (we believe) moral action while obviating (to Laruelle) any scission that may arise from Kant's ideas (a common criticism being the apparent separation between the world and its transcendental conception in our minds). Second, Laruelle is giving his own defence of philosophy against what seems its terminal stage in the world of ideas: this is not helped by the advent of celebrity philosophers who have surrendered the field of philosophy to mathematics (Badiou being its paragon).

And third, Laruelle provides a critical and creative space for thinkers to open up seemingly different fields of thought that may allow for collaboration-unity between disparate ideas. In this respect it can be claimed that he gives a new opening for Bataille's heterology to be properly recognized. What this means is that the obsession with rational-linear thinking of mathematicism and axiomatic certainty in philosophy which rationalizes many things in our world in complicity to enslaving rather than freeing us (think neoclassical economics): now has an effective counter by the opening NP provides into a larger framework. However, Laruelle does seem to claim that NP not be treated as a replacement for philosophy as we understand it today, but a means of seeing philosophy in its next stage of evolution in an open-ended manner.

In other words, we have been given a valuable formulation by Laruelle of a way of thinking (that can actually be traced to Eastern philosophical thought though Laruelle may disagree) that articulates ideas needed to bring us out of the failed rationalist paradigm of binary thinking, neo-fascistic attitudes of zero-sum gaming based on scarcity, chicanery and violence in a manner that not only gives philosophical thinking much needed credibility these days, but (hopefully) keeps thinking and *caring* alive and well.





In an earlier piece (under a pseudonym) expressing the key aspects of NP, Laruelle formulates his ideas contra Badiou to show how the sterility of a multiplicity without an ontology is a multiplicity of the void. Badiou has given us a separation between philosophy and ontology while privileging mathematics. Laruelle sharpens his claim in *Anti-Badiou* that in trying to procure a pure space for philosophy through a merger with mathematics and separating it from ontology and science, Badiou has created a void (hence, his ideas reflect an 'ontology of the void'). Badiou's 'ontological' base is Cantorian set theory and he thereby advocates a materialistic set of ideas based on the obvious materiality of the world without any ontological base *per se* accept pure ideas in the void. Philosophy thinks itself scientific in the use of mathematics but is in effect far from it as it is based on axiomatic thinking and has a flat ontology devoid of anything substantive from the power of human creativity and imagination. It is a form of nihilism (this may be of some use: "The metaphysics of atheism").

What follows from this, and this is not stated by Laruelle so much as an extension of his ideas, can be said to reflect the unholy deference given to the 'ontology of the void' by economics through its preoccupation with the measurable through mathematics. Economics also thinks itself scientific with its use of mathematics but is in effect a flat ontology as per Badiou. It too is suitable for militancy and conformism and authoritarianism: witness the wars of colonialism and neo-colonialism for the sake of 'open markets', 'invisible hands' and American-style 'Democracy' *et al.*

It is this emptiness of economics that was looked at previously ("A critique of Capital II", "A critique of Capital III") which is speciously covered over by a metaphysics of transcendence (for instance, giving an ontological conception to Walrasian/Paretian equilibrium and Capital). Through all this we understand better economics' dangerously intertwined DNA with that of Capital: the culminating effect of this mutation is that economics has butchered humanity and the world into pieces to fit various sized coffins sealed with amorality and nailed down by immorality.



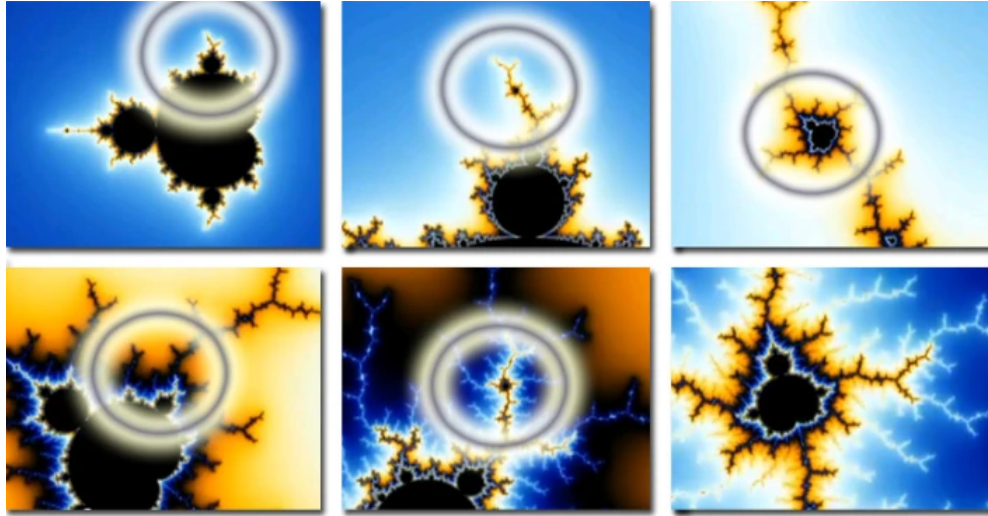
In *Anti-Badiou* Laruelle's ideas hit pay dirt. It is made clear that he does not privilege mathematics and measurability but provides an indefinable ever expanding space for thinking which is generically scientific. What he means is that NP is an expression of the type of thinking generated via quantum physics. So we have a type of philosophy that does not involve *philosophizing* (as Badiou does to create conformism of ideas) but allows there to be modalities of thought built from philosophy and science, philosophy and art, philosophy and politics, etc. The generic also means that which is indeterminate, complex or a philosophical variable; it does not mean generality. It is quantum in nature. This works well with Bataille's notion of economics and expenditure as expressions of energy predicated on a generically scientific basis that allows us *in the manner of quantum physics to understand the ideas of socio-economic-thinking*: this is a fundamental idea that this essay is trying to get across.

Moreover, NP also allows for an 'ontology of the void' to be part of the philosophical field and is tolerant in that sense. It allows for a variety of thought that is consonant with democratic practice (for instance, a plurality of views), and is contrary to authoritarian-totalitarian approaches to things. This is an idea that Laruelle consciously makes in his work.

What this further implies is that NP helps open a space of thinking that allows the functioning of heterology and, therefore, the deployment of quantum thinking with economics which thereby supports the use of the imagination and critical thought in formulating new paradigms of ideas that will take us beyond the platitudinal dullard constrictions of traditional modes of linear thinking.

It must be mentioned that to help explain his idea of NP as generically influenced by science, Laruelle states that it is *underdetermined* by quantum physics. This is evidently an attempt to emphasize that it is not a subset of quantum physics and that it is certainly not *overdetermined* by it. NP is a way of immanence of the One (Laruelle's expression) that gives philosophy a possibility of operating and framing as a mode of thought analogous to quantum physics, that is, we are talking about *quantum thinking* that also drives quantum physics.

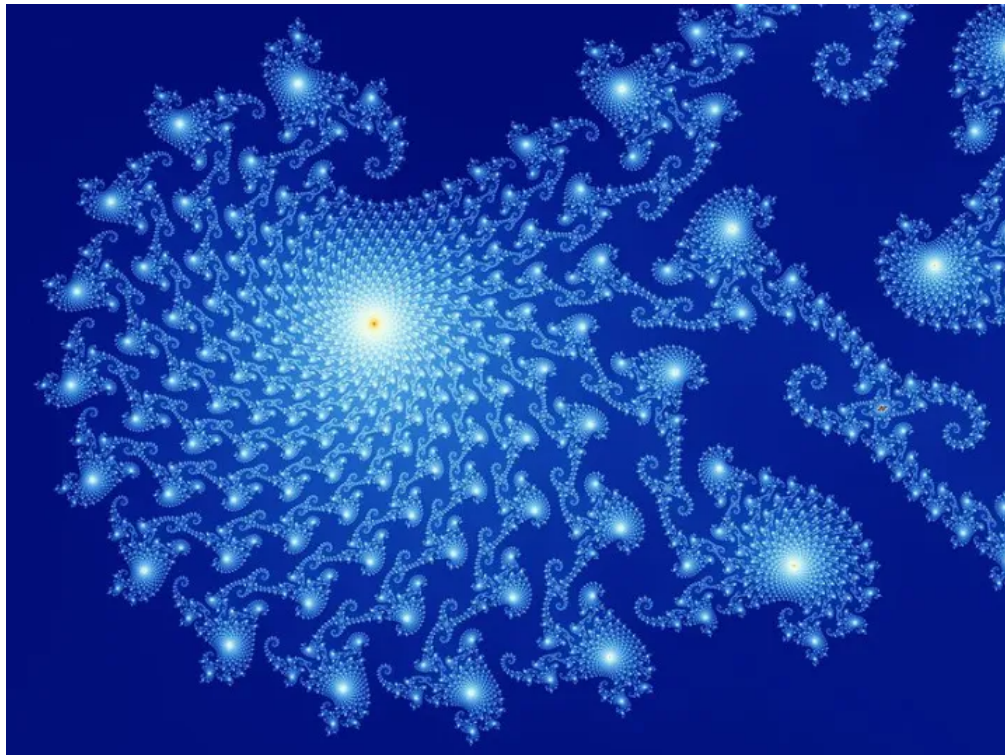




Furthermore, it must be understood that the generically scientific and privileging of quantum physics is not a way of doing scientific philosophy. Laruelle's concern is to make clear that quantum thinking, which is the generic mode of thought of quantum physics, is not a science in the traditional linear rationalist mode: rather, it allows for extra- or multi-dimensional thought. This is at the core of NP.

The ideas of D&G and Lyotard work well with NP. In fact, they work excitingly well within the open and expanding framing device it offers. The opening provided by quantum possibilities is not the restrictive mathematico-void certitude and fixity that comes with Badiou's ideational terrain. The quantum opening of thought is precisely what philosophy should provide but not through using its official nomenclature and role as carried out in the academy and understood by the media. *Non-philosophy*, or rather, a *quantum mode of thinking* is what provides philosophy the operating principles as a field of immanence not caught up with the categorization of ideas as that which falls into what are usually silos for areas like analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, the philosophy of science, aesthetics, ethics, etc..

Laruelle's NP also works well with Marxian (he prefers the term 'Marxist/Marxism') ideas in contradistinction to Badiou's ontological 'militance of the void'. Here the ethical dimension of Laruelle's position comes in. And here we can only recast what Foucault says in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*: we hope Laruelle forgives us but he has indeed provided a basis for a moral philosophy in the age of quantum physics and would have done Kant proud (could we call Laruelle's thinking Kant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?).



Whereas philosophy and economics as we know them today are stuck in a limiting 3D paradigm of linearity and are thereby restrictive, the quantum leap of NP is extra-dimensional and like the physics it is analogous to — open-minded to many dimensions. With NP, and the ideas of other thinkers discussed here, we have a multidimensional approach and it is this that takes us out of the old paradigm to the new one which will help us find solutions to our moribund socio-economic issues.

(In “Revolutionary constructivism” the idea of multidimensionality is looked at contra Badiou, but this was not in relation to Laruelle’s ideas. The latter’s ideas not only complement but open up space that allows the ideas from that essay to segue into an overarching framework driven by the Kantian critique. But we now deploy Laruelle to propel the enterprise we are developing onto the next stage of its evolution).

It cannot be overstated that Laruelle and the thinkers here epitomize the non-rational *vis-à-vis* the rational, linear, hierarchical, patriarchal, fascistic, violent and strait-jacketed ideas represented by neoclassical economists and celebrity philosophers the likes of Badiou. It is via the non-rational that the important notions of ethics through reason can be brought in (the Kantian project comes into play) and it is this that needs to be briefly looked at as a possible gateway through which ideas for the new paradigm may be peeked at to help give us a chance to move out of our rut of self-destruction enhanced by the murderous ways of Capital and its wielders.



### E. Toward a theory of economic justice

The purpose of highlighting the violence of economics is to make us aware that what we think is acceptable is actually that which is destroying us, and to help show a possible way out of injustice and towards justice. Economic rationality is a linear (3D) mode of thinking that is extraordinarily restrictive on creativity and the imagination and is devoid of any knowledge or understanding of the non-rational. And through excess reliance on the rational we in effect lose a sense of reason/reasonableness and have created an *auto-da-fé* burning our way into the unsustainable, or — morally defunct modes of planetary destruction. It is through obsession with rationality that we become unreasonable and lose our ethical sense and compassion and interconnectedness to all of life.

It is by using a non-rational and holistic approach that we understand better, in tandem with our reason and the heart, that life is immeasurable; that the idea of producing and sharing wealth and goods and services is beyond any calculus of utility or the



scrofula of self-interest. It is the acceptance of that which is *beyond rationality*, measurement and fear-based promulgation of the idea and *practice of scarcity* that drives economic theory — and used as a weapon by the wielders of Capital against humanity to allow for the survival in excessive luxury of the few against the well being and lives of the many — that we need to grasp and put into practice ourselves.

That which is beyond rationality and is the essence of the non-rational is multidimensional thinking and living; it is that which allows for each and every decision being made not through separation, duality or the fissiparity between what needs to be done and what we are doing based on self-interestedness, but via that which is right; that which unifies and emanates from a moral centre in our beings and the universe. Part of this can be achieved by first disbanding and stopping the teaching of harmful doctrines by some departments in academia. How will the functionaries and wielders of Capital continue their warfare upon the world and humanity when its teachings are no longer being spread and its most potent form of indoctrination debilitated?



What will the banking cartels and megacorporations do once the teachings spawned throughout institutions (which have become largely propaganda apparatuses) are terminated; the high priests known as economists defrocked; and their acolytes and other functionaries of economic violence taught to beat their tools of exploitation (recycle their text books) and global injustice into ploughshares? They will have their Capital but not the ideational reference points, and so-called intellectual wherewithal to spread further falsehood about the world and its inhabitants. Capital will have to be finally used as the crude knuckled-dusted implement it is in the open for all to see without the trappings of highfalutin economic theory. Once Capital is seen for what it truly is, it may even start to be disempowered as strong resistance to it becomes open everywhere.

What would the profit and war mongers of the world do when we formulate and teach only ideas that promote justice, fairness, sharing, compassion, balance, wealth distribution, international harmony, environmental conservation and planetary well being? Would some opt for a kind of *seppuku*? The first step is to stop the teaching of economics as we know it. Teach everything that is the opposite of what the ill-conceived doctrine of scarcity tells us; teach abundance and sufficiency of needs; teach human well being as opposed to chrematistics. Teach service-to-others as a practice as opposed to a service-to-self ideology. Institute and support new banking practices and encourage actively efforts by peoples of the world to work together to save ourselves and spread positive intent and energy; after all, everything is energy.

We have imagined and created hell on earth; we can and have imagined utopia: it is time to create it.



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